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TEN FAR-OUT YEARS!

Join the Red Dwarf party, Saturday BBC2.
PLUS Ainsley's recipes start in RT this week

BBC2 marks the birthday of its longest-running sitcom on Valentine's Day (Saturday) with Red Dwarf Night, while on Monday UK Gold shows the entire first series

10 years of loving Red Dwarf

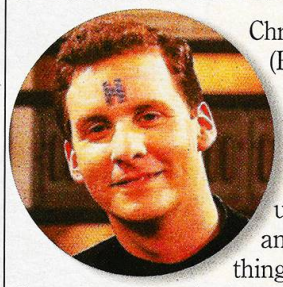
And ten reasons why we do

1 Even the dictionary says it's cool

red dwarf *n.* one of a class of small cool main-sequence stars, as Patrick Moore explains on *Red Dwarf Night*

Size isn't everything: a real red dwarf star is small, but just as cool as the series

2 The scripts make Chris Barrie laugh



Chris Barrie (Rimmer/Ace): "The thing with reading *Red Dwarf* scripts is you always end up laughing – and that's one thing I missed when I was away from it. Although I didn't work the full weeks, series seven was great fun, a different atmosphere completely. And the fans are very enthusiastic – it probably has the most ardent following of any TV comedy."

3 The catlike grace of Danny John-Jules

Danny John-Jules (Cat): "Everyone thinks I'm shorter in real life, probably because of the air of grace that makes me look taller than I am. A lot of people don't believe it's me when they meet me. I was filming *Maid Marion* in Somerset, and about the only place to have a drink was the nearby Butlin's. I met a guy with a *Red Dwarf* T-shirt on, which had my face on it along with the others, and I got round to saying I was on the show, and he just said, 'No way!'"

Ian McKinnell/ Science Photo Library/ Grant Naylor

4 It now has state-of-the-art special effects

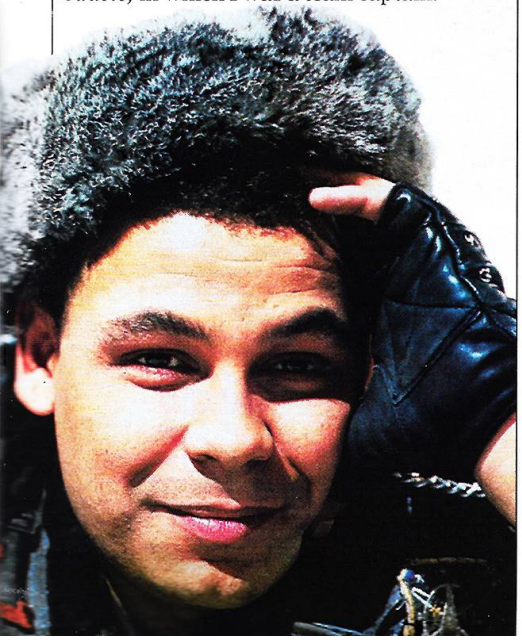
Technological advances in the form of computer-generated imagery (CGI), digital video effects (DVE) and digital sound have enabled the team to create a super-improved version of all the original series of *Red Dwarf*.

"With the help of computer graphics, we can now have, say, a lift hurtling down 70 floors rather than the crew sitting in the TV studio and all the chairs wobbling," says Ed Bye, director of five series. Digitalising the old footage, shot on then industry-standard one-inch video tape, means that the quality now resembles that of series seven. "Colours and textures now come flying out," Bye enthuses.

The original mono sound was also enhanced. As Bye explains, "The only sound we had for our beefed-up Sinclair 5 was an old Triumph, but now we can re-create it electronically." Fans will also notice a new ship (above) – a computer-generated image assembled from shots of a new, 12-foot-long model. Add a film-quality "wash" over the screen image and a letterbox "widescreen" effect, and you have, Bye quips, "the difference between Captain Pugwash's boat *The Black Pig* and James Cameron's *Titanic!*"

5 It's a worldwide phenomenon

Craig Charles (Lister): "What's amazing is that I'm recognised all over the world through *Red Dwarf*. In New York City, I nipped into a store on Broadway and the owner pointed to the TV, and *Red Dwarf* was on! The show's enabled me to travel all over the world, too, partly for fan club conventions. British fans are exceptional, but the American fans are something else. Some of them fly 500 miles to stand in line for three hours, just to meet me, then when they do they collapse. It makes you feel like a rock star! Oh, and I got to snog William Shatner when he was a panellist on *Space Cadets,* in which I was a team captain."



6 Dwarfers aren't like Trekkies

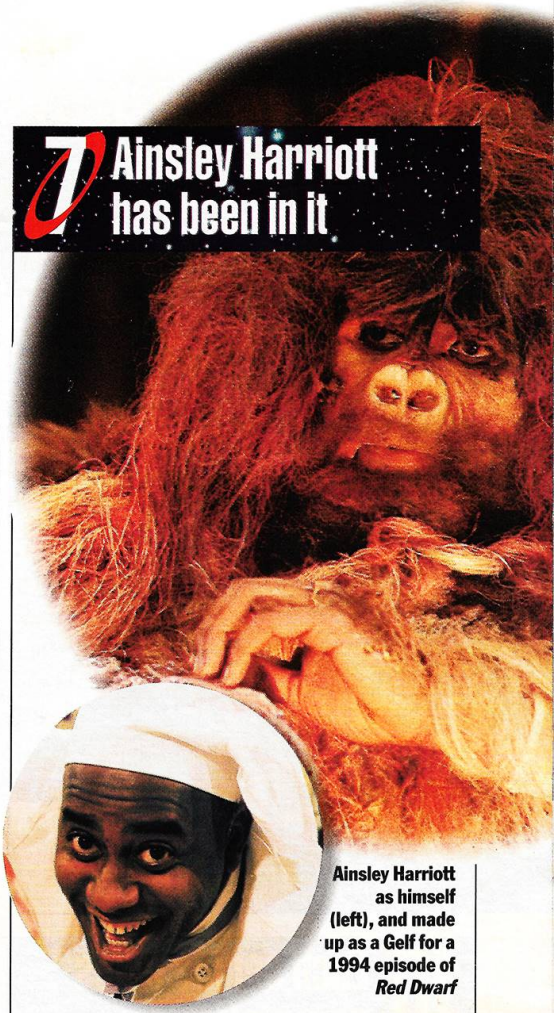
It may not reach *Star Trek* proportions, but *Red Dwarf* still has a reputable army of die-hard fans, known as Dwarfers. Bev Couper Harris roughly knows them all, being the editor of *Better than Life,* the official quarterly fanzine, which is mailed to 3,000 members. "But a lot of members are couples, so our membership is more like 5,000, ranging from eight-year-olds to grandparents."

What unites them, reckons *Better than Life's* chairman Steve Rogers, is the interaction between *Red Dwarf's* closely knit squad of characters. "The best comedies are based around two or three people," he says. "Craig Charles likened the show to *Steptoe and Son* in space, in that two people don't get on with each other but, by dint of their situation, are forced to."

"People care for these characters, whereas most sitcom characters don't have that much depth," adds Couper Harris. "And, of course, it's funny – pure escapist fun. We aren't like Trekkies; they tend to take things seriously, including dressing up in costume. We only dress up as a bit of a joke."

Rogers says, "*Red Dwarf* fans are comedy fans first, not sci-fi fans, which is probably why they don't dress up. The show is there to be laughed at, so you don't end up with huge serious debates as you do with *Star Trek. Red Dwarf* is much more fun, and healthier, too!"

7 Ainsley Harriott has been in it



Ainsley Harriott as himself (left), and made up as a Gelf for a 1994 episode of *Red Dwarf*

TV chef Ainsley Harriott gets transported three million years into the future to celebrate *Red Dwarf's* tenth anniversary on BBC2 this Saturday. In a futuristic version of the 20th-century cookery show for novices *Can't Cook Won't Cook,* he attempts to teach his culinary skills to five space travellers who *Can't Smeg Won't Smeg*. The result?

"Disastrous, quite honestly," says Ainsley with a typical grin. "It was pretty messy, especially with Lister and Kryten. I think they had a right old session down there!"

It's not the first time Ainsley has been part of this cult space comedy. Back in 1994 he guest-starred as the chief Gelf in *Red Dwarf VI*. "I'm the one that offers my daughter for marriage, who does the funny handshake with Kryten," he recalls. You can be forgiven for not recognising him because his costume covered him from head to toe in orange hair and he spoke an alien language.

"It was all this woomba, woomba," he says. "It linked up with other things I was doing with Kryten, so it had to be right. So I was going home and going 'hhrraaggh, woobbh' and it had to make sense because Kryten was waiting for his line to follow on!"

Ainsley can once again be seen drizzling over his olive oil while dancing around the kitchen when *Ainsley Harriott's Meals in Minutes* starts on BBC2 this Monday.

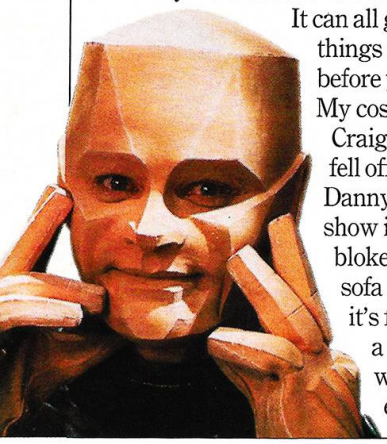
◆ **A collection of recipes from Ainsley's new series begins on page 32**

MORE REASONS OVERLEAF

8 It could explode at any minute

Robert Llewellyn (Kryten): "Wearing the rubber mask can reduce me to tears because it's incredibly uncomfortable, hot and sweaty. It's like having someone else's socks stuck to your face for 36 hours! But it looks brilliant on screen, so what can you do?

"Everyone involved says it's the toughest show they do because of the technical stuff. It can all go wrong, like things blowing up before you're ready. My costume split, Craig's hairpiece fell off, as did one of Danny's teeth. The show isn't just two blokes sitting on a sofa having a beer; it's five people in a spaceship waiting to explode!'



9 What you see is absolutely genuine

Chloë Annett (Kochanski): "Truly, I've never laughed so much in my entire life as when I was filming the series. But my strongest memory is the last day of filming series seven, in the *Duct Soup* episode, where we were drenched in freezing cold water for four hours and pushed up against a metal grate. It was probably an act of revenge by the prop people. The power of a fire hose is incredible, and the pictures of all of us screaming are genuine horror!

"Poor Doug [Naylor] tried to cheer us up and got what he called my visual vasectomy look in return. But *Duct Soup* is, ironically, my favourite episode, because I was more comfortable playing Kochanski by then."

10 Each series takes new risks

When five million viewers tuned in for the very first *Red Dwarf,* co-creators Doug Naylor and Rob Grant thought they were on to a winner. But, as Naylor recalls, the figure had dwindled to two million by the end of the first series.

"I think people expected a comedy *Star Wars* and were put off by the wobbly sets," he laughs. "But some people could see past the sets, and it became word of mouth. I'm convinced that the retro look of the show contributed to its success because people felt sorry for it, this low budget sci-fi series that was trying to be funny."

Needing more characters than Lister and his computer, Naylor and Grant settled on a hologram ("an alien or a robot was too clichéd") and a creature evolved from a cat ("we needed something quirky and different"). The result was a runaway success – the show has been BBC2's biggest export of the past ten years.

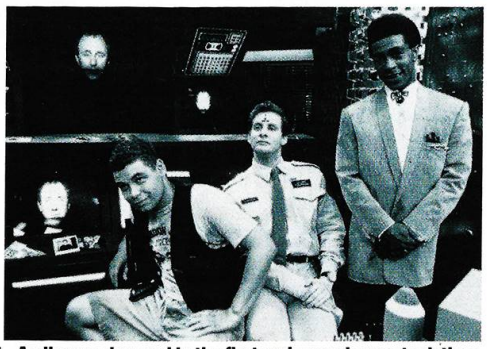
"You have to be excited about what you're doing," Naylor maintains. "Working only to a winning formula doesn't give you much of a buzz, so each series tries to push things a bit further and take risks." To that end they added location filming and the mechanoid Kryten and tried new approaches.

"We're quite happy to give up the comedy sometimes, for the sake of pathos," says Naylor. "Favourite episodes tend to be ones like *Back to Reality,* but there are shows with three times the number of laughs as that. Plot twists are what people really remember."

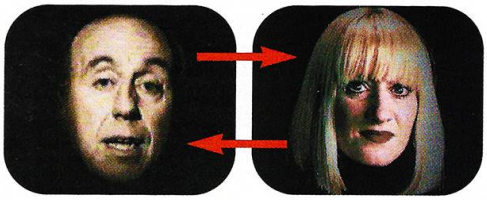
Grant has moved on, leaving Naylor alone to navigate *Red Dwarf* through the eighth series and also a *Red Dwarf* film. Contrary to rumour, it is not a Hollywood effort with the likes of Robin Williams, Steve Martin or Leonard Nimoy, but will have the British cast, "otherwise it wouldn't be *Red Dwarf*".

Interviews by Martin Aston

◆ Hear a live chat with Doug Naylor on Monday 16 February, 7–8pm, on www.oi.beeb.com/chat



Audiences dropped in the first series as viewers took time to accept the characters and humour, but Holly, Lister, Rimmer and Cat (left to right) became firm favourites



Face in the future: Hattie Hayridge took over from Norman Lovett as Holly, but Lovett will return for series eight

RED DWARF SPECIAL OFFERS

Set of ten Red Dwarf postcards, £6.99

To mark the tenth anniversary of *Red Dwarf* we are offering this exclusive set of ten high-quality postcards produced by Slow Dazzle and *RT*. Each of the pictures has been selected by Grant Naylor Productions and they will not be available elsewhere, so order your set now for £6.99!

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A perfect gift for all *Red Dwarf* fans to keep membership, credit and loyalty cards in, only £12.95! Keep cards safe in this black leather-look case with keyring. The holder contains a picture of the cast and sleeves for ten cards, with the *Red Dwarf* logo in hand-cast antiqued pewter on the front.

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With the *Red Dwarf* emblem in hand-cast antiqued pewter, these strong, quality cufflinks will brighten any shirt. Presented in a smart box.

Red Dwarf videos

We are offering two new, digitally remastered videos of the first six episodes and also the *Red Dwarf Xtended* video. For more details, see page 66.

Order hotline: (01483) 204488

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TODAY'S CHOICES

In hot pursuit of BBC2's celebration of the tenth anniversary of its longest-running sitcom, here's a chance to enjoy all six episodes of the first series of **Red Dwarf** (9pm–12.55am UK Gold) – in one Lister-sized helping. Naturally enough – by its own sci-fi standards – we begin with the End, as Craig Charles emerges from suspended animation to find he is the sole human survivor on a spaceship . . . more time travel, and history is re-written, when the **Sliders** (9pm Sky 1) suddenly find themselves in the *British* States of America . . . while **Time Travellers** (8pm Discovery) finds out about the last of the Mohicans.

A-Z OF OTHER CHANNELS

Red alert: Ainsley Harriott cooks up a treat for space travellers in *Red Dwarf Night*

TODAY'S CHOICES

FACTUAL

An Awfully Big Adventure

5.55pm BBC2

Arthur Ransome's tales of the *Swallows and Amazons'* boating escapades in the Lake District and beyond have captivated generations of children. But, as the third in the series on children's authors reveals, his own childhood was blighted by a feeling of under-achievement and his relationship with his own daughter was not close. It seems his books were a way of making amends but, even then, he fell out with the children who provided the models for his fictional characters. Now in their 80s, two of them recall their relationship with the man they called "Uncle Arthur". It was not as though Ransome's life lacked adventure – he was a newspaper correspondent in Russia at the time of the revolution and married Trotsky's secretary. His is an absorbing story that finally becomes centred around Lake Coniston.

DRAMA

Casualty

8.10pm BBC1

It's an interesting twist that a series renowned for saving its most dramatic stories for the final episode should feature a hostage scenario with two more episodes to go.

Baz is visiting her solicitor for advice on moving away from Holby for a new job when she is taken hostage by a gun-wielding man (Nicholas McGaughey, who co-stars in *Mortimer's Law* on Friday).

Meanwhile paramedic Josh is considering adopting Liam, the youngster he has befriended, while Richard McCaig reveals his feelings about the job: "I never thought I'd hear myself say this," he tells George. "I'm still an SHO, still in Holby. I'm sick of it."

DRAMA

Jonathan Creek

9.00pm BBC1

Can a dead man exact revenge for his own betrayal? Here is another apparently intractable question for partners Jonathan and Maddy in the mystery series that is as amusing as it is dramatic. It is the start of a two-part story that sees the engaging duo first on the scene of a murder.

On their way, they encounter more examples of the sort of eccentricity that helps to make the series so entertaining. Among the characters they meet is a legendary, blind jazz trumpeter whose touchie-feelie approach to women is more helped than hampered by his supposed disability.

And then there's Adam's sister, Kitty, who has come down from Dumfries on a visit and is quite oblivious to her brother's embarrassment. It adds up to a magical mystery tour.

COMEDY

Red Dwarf Night

9.00pm BBC2

One minute it was *Steptoe and Son* in space, complete with wobbly sets and an inventive line in comedy. Now it's time for the tenth birthday party of the show that has built up a loyal following of fans who don't take themselves, or the series, too seriously. The crew are all on hand along with a gang of Dwarfers, and there's a repeat of an episode from series six entitled *Gunmen of the Apocalypse*.

One-time Gelf, chef Ainsley Harriott is reunited with the crew for a cookery lesson, Bamber Gascoigne asks the questions as the cast takes on the fans in *Universe Challenge*, and Patrick Moore reveals what a red dwarf actually is.

You can read more about *Red Dwarf* in our feature on page 20.

PICK OF THE REST

Yo-Yo Ma: Inspired by Bach (8.05pm BBC2)
The cellist performs with choreographer Mark Morris

Brideshead Revisited (9pm C4)
Sebastian gives Rex the slip on the way to a cure in Zurich

Olympic Grandstand (12 midnight BBC2; 12.50am BBC1)
The first ever Olympic curling medals are decided.

PICK OF THE FILMS

Henry V (2.25am C5) ★★★★